

# **Cincinnati Canners: A Nineteenth Century Cincinnati Industry and Some of Its Competitors**

**By**

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**Contributions to Ohio Ceramic History**

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Grove City, Ohio

Cover: Yellow ware canner attributed to  
George Scott, ca. 1860-1875



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## Introduction

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Cincinnati remained an important center for earthenware manufacture, long before it gathered renown for the artware produced most famously by Rookwood and abetted by more ephemeral art potteries ranging from Avon and Matt Morgan to Wheatley (not quite so ephemeral) and Kenwood. Yet it is East Liverpool and Zanesville that vie for the title of “Pottery Center of the World,” a title somewhat tarnished by the onslaught of foreign imports (not to mention plastics) which have largely reduced a major industry to the roles of the studio pottery and the classroom.

It was ever thus—before plastic containers and frozen foods there were glass contain-

ers and “tin cans,” a duo that together formed the nemesis of a once ubiquitous pottery product, the earthenware and stoneware canning jar (also known as “wax sealer,” as wax was invariably used to seal the presumably vacuum-packed contents).

James Spratt, of Cincinnati, has been credited with inventing the first groove-ring wax sealer as a replacement for soldering “tin cans,” in 1854 (Milner 2004; Moulton 2001). Although this may not be strictly true, for Spratt’s patent (“Fruit Can,” July 18, 1854) and an earlier patent issued to Henry C. Nicholson and Spratt (“Sealing Preserve Cans,” 10,394, January 3, 1854) do not specifically lay claim to the innovation of the groove-ring, it serves as a good starting point for the history of the Cincinnati canner.

Spratt was born in England around 1810, migrated to the United States, and was in the lightning rod business from 1845 to 1850. (His glass lightning rod insulators are believed

to have been manufactured by the Cincinnati firm of Gray and Hemingray.) His Fruit Can patent apparently led to the manufacture of



**James Spratt**

self-sealing fruit cans at 234 Walnut St. (Williams' Cincinnati Directory 1855: 205), although he is not listed in 1856. His business was very short-lived and no trace of him is found again until 1870, when it appears he was living with his 41 year old brother, Thomas, a farmer at Watertown, north of Marietta in Washington County. Thomas and wife Jane are listed in the 1880 census and are buried in Rainbow Cemetery, but otherwise the history of James remains unknown. His patented cans are among the oldest dated cans known and have become rare collector items.

## **William Bromley**

William Bromley came from Staffordshire and is first listed in the 1849 Cincinnati directory, operating the Brighton Pottery at the southwest corner of Hamilton Road and Freeman Avenue. He may have been in Cincinnati as early as 1842 (Barber 1893: 273), although this is not substantiated by the

city directories. He did have a child born ca. 1845 in Ohio, but it is not certain that she was born in Cincinnati, and Genheimer (1988: 57) suggests that Bromley may have stopped in East Liverpool. The earliest record for him in Cincinnati is the 1849 city directory, which lists him as operating the Brighton Pottery. A suggestive piece of evidence that he may have





**Gen. Taylor Pitcher ca. 1848-50**



produced Rockingham ware in Cincinnati before 1849 is a “sexagon” pitcher bearing the embossed likeness of “Gen. Taylor,” no doubt related to General Zachary Taylor’s 1848 presidential campaign. Less likely, since it does apostrophize him as *General* Taylor, it may have been a memorial piece made upon his death in 1850. In any case Bromley is listed as operating a pottery through 1855 but the 1856 directory lists him only as “potter.” Stout (1923:20) appears to have misinterpreted the data provided him from the city directories to infer that Hamlet Greatbatch began producing Rockingham and yellow ware in 1854 and operated with Enoch Skinner, as Skinner, Greatbach, and Co. in 1855, with the pottery becoming Bromley and Bailey in 1856. Genheimer (1988: 57) compounds the problem by erroneously stating that Bromley “continued to be listed as a simple potter until 1858, when he was again listed as operating the Brighton Pottery.” In fact, we are dealing

with the same data—city directories—and these do not entirely confirm either Stout’s or Genheimer’s statements. Both the 1853 and 1855 city directories specifically say “pottery,” not “potter.”

The 1860 Cincinnati directory lists Wm. Bromley & Son, Potters, but the 1861 Covington, Kentucky, directory also lists Bromley as operating the Covington Pottery at the northwest corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> & Madison. How long the Covington Pottery was in operation remains unclear, though Genheimer (1988: 58) has documented that all of the property was sold to the Hemingray Glass Co. in 1865, at which time the Bromleys were living in Covington. The fact that Hemingray secured patents for a fruit jar “cap” in 1863 (Patent 38,820) and a glass fruit jar in 1865 (Patent 48,399) is clearly symptomatic that the earthenware fruit jar industry in general and Bromley’s in particular were on the wane.



Bromley's will was signed September 23, 1867 and filed October 18, 1867. No obituary has been found in Cincinnati newspapers for this period. Although the will makes no mention of a pottery, it is interesting to note that the executor of his will was none other than Fredrick Dallas (Box 21 Case File 12020, University of Cincinnati Archives).

In 1986, Genheimer was enabled to excavate much of the Bromley pottery site in Covington, Kentucky (Genheimer1988). Unfortunately, none of this material has been illustrated or described in detail. Genheimer does describe the elaborate eagle Bromley mark used on the Cincinnati Brighton Rockingham but no other mark or distinctive ware treatment is described. He also cites the 1860 U. S. Manufacturing Schedule, which describes the products of the Covington Pottery as including no fewer than 2,500 dozen pitchers, some 3,000 dozen bowls, and

1,000 dozen fruit jars. Production at the Covington Pottery had probably ceased by 1865, as it is not listed in the 1866 directory.

Subsequent to Genheimer's excavation, the author visited the Covington pottery site, then already heavily impacted by construction. Very little waster material was available but surface collecting did recover two undoubted canner sherds marked by a distinctive, vertically ribbed design. The sherds recovered bear the characteristic (for Cincinnati canners) "pumpkin-colored" glaze and a much darker glaze approaching Rockingham in color. Even though no yellow ware canner



**Covington Pottery Canner Fragment**

sherds were found, I am confident that canners such as the one shown on the following page are Bromley products. This style is perhaps the rarest of Cincinnati canner forms, consistent with the relatively short-lived production of Bromley's Covington Pottery. It may be worth noting here, since they are visible in the photograph on the next page, that the reeding along the interior of the rim also occurs on canners made by Scott, Tempest & Co., and Dallas. Its function is presumed to promote adherence of the wax adhesive holding the tin lid to the canning jar. The heavy crazing shown on the yellow ware Bromley canner also suggests one reason for the replacement of the yellow ware canner by the "pumpkin colored" or "brown" canner, as these show crazing and related soiling to a lesser degree.

While Bromley very likely produced earthenware canners at his Covington Pottery from at least 1860 to 1865, little is known about the products of his original Cincinnati

Pottery, even whether he produced canners there or not.



## **George Scott**

On June 5, 1860, George Scott was awarded a patent for an “Improvement in Moulds for Jars,” the improvement consisting of making molds in two parts, each of which could be rotated on the potter’s wheel separately while its part of the jar was being formed on its inner surface. This method was widely adopted by many earthenware and stoneware potteries throughout the United States, but the interesting fact to us is that Scott’s patent drawing indicates that the product had a distinctive molded design which allows us to identify his unmarked canners. This fact is verified by 1865-1867 Williams’ Cincinnati directory advertisements that illustrate one of the Scott canners with a slightly different design, lacking the vertical rib but still incorporating the typical molded halberd pattern. Dates of the illustrations suggest that the canner form without the vertical rib might

be somewhat later. In addition, there is a fragment of the base of a yellow ware canner found at the Scott factory site, indicating a form in which the vertical ribs continued to the base. Complete specimens of this particular form are not known but thus far the vertical ribs occur only on yellow ware examples and one unique yellow ware example with spattered Rockingham glaze, suggesting that the brown or “pumpkin-colored” forms are later.

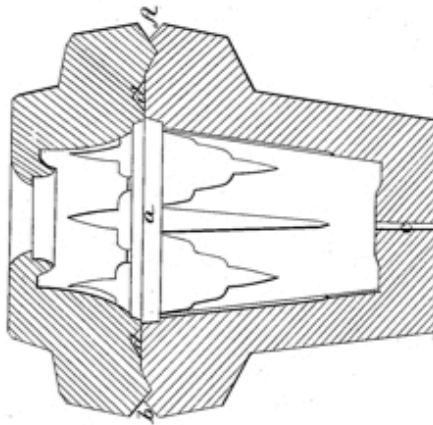
The 1860 patent date and the 1865-1867 William’s Cincinnati Directory illustrations also serve to document that Scott was producing earthenware canners for at least this seven year period. How much earlier and later production occurred remains unknown. The intriguing question, which also remains unanswered at this point, is whether his invention was responsible for the sudden development of earthenware fruit canner manufacturing in Cincinnati.

No. 28,611.

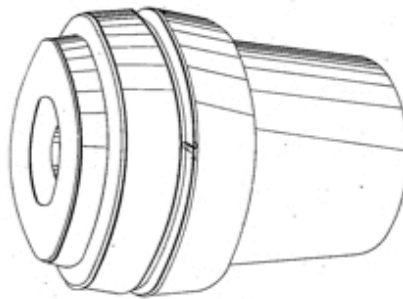
PATENTED JUNE 5, 1860.

G. SCOTT.  
MOLD FOR JARS.

*Fig. 2.*



*Fig. 1.*



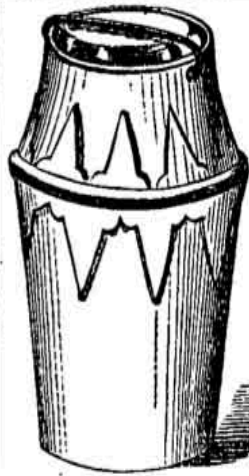
*Witnesses:*  
*Wm. C. Long*  
*Charles L. Fisher*

*Inventor:*  
*George Scott*

THE MERRILL PIERCE CO., PRINTED AT THE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

**George Scott's 1860 Patent**





**GEORGE SCOTT,**  
MANUFACTURER OF AND DEALER IN  
**ROCKINGHAM AND YELLOW WARE,**  
FRONT STREET POTTERY,  
NO. 690 WEST FRONT STREET, CINCINNATI.

To reach George Scott's Pottery, take the 3rd and 4th Street Railroad Cars running west. All conductors of cars can direct to Pottery. Cars leave every seven minutes down from Main Street. Pottery within half a square of termination of Railroad.

## 1865 Williams Directory Advertisement

While the 1860 patent may indicate the earliest of Scott's canner production, according to an extensive article in *The Crockery Journal* (March 27, 1875), his establishment, which was at that time one of the largest of its kind in the country, commenced operation April 1, 1849, Scott coming from Tunstall, Staffordshire. How long before his patent application was he producing these canning jars? The only available evidence, Cincinnati city directories, provides no answer to this question. In 1875 he was employing forty



hands and shipping ware “everywhere throughout the West and South, including Illinois, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and the territories.” At that time Scott was said to have a near monopoly on the business in Cincinnati, his location adjacent to the Ohio River saving him about \$1500 per year in drayage. He claimed to be producing more chambers and spittoons



**Ribbed Yellow Ware Canning Sherd  
from George Scott Pottery Site**

than any other firm—200 dozen chambers a week and Rockingham ware teapots by the thousands. Annual business was estimated at \$50,000.



**Ribbed Canner Attributed to George Scott**



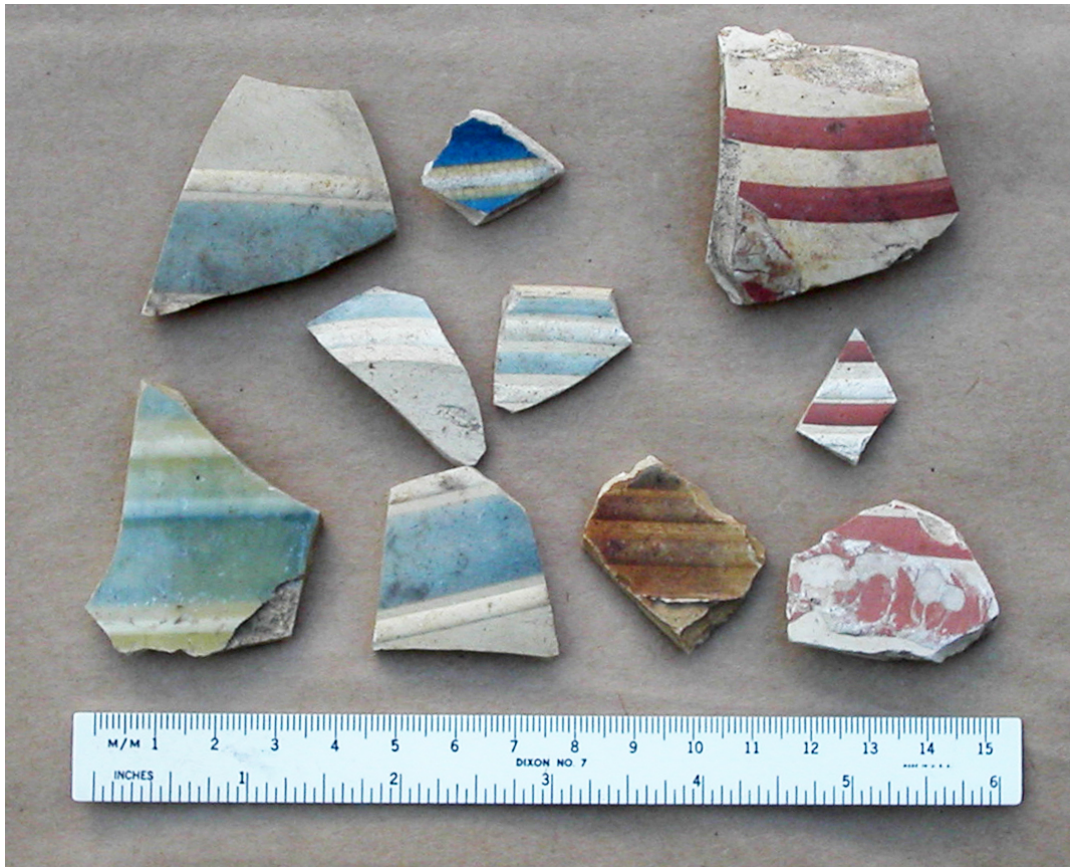


**A Brownware Scott Canner  
Note hole for bale handle**



**Another Scott Brownware Canner**





## **Banded and Cable Slip Decorated Sherds from the Scott Pottery Site**

In 1875 Scott's pottery was consuming 700 bushels of coal a week, no doubt brought down river by flatboat on the Ohio, like his clay, from Amanda Furnace, Kentucky, opposite Iron-ton. This year of 1875 was remarkable not only for George Scott but for several other

Cincinnati potters. Scott was still advertising yellow ware and Rockingham, as well as “brown earthen air-tight fruit jars,” as were Coultrey and Maloney, the owners of the Dayton Street Pottery. At the same time, East

P. L. COULTREY. JAS. MALONEY.

**COULTREY & MALONEY,**  
MANUFACTURERS OF  
**Rockingham & Yellow Ware,**  
And Brown Earthen Air-Tight Fruit Jars.



Dayton St., Pottery, Nos. 55 & 57 Dayton St., Cincinnati.

To reach the Pottery, take John Street Cars on Fourth Street, get out corner Dayton and Baymiller, go East on Dayton Street two squares. Send for Price List.

### **1875 Advertisement from *Crockery Journal***

Liverpool, firms such as Manley, Cartwright and Co., C. C. Thompson and Co., Flentke, Worcester and Co., and Agner, Foutts & Co.,

also continued to advertise air-tight or “self-sealing fruit jars. Change, however, was in the air, for as early as 1869, Tempest, Brockmann & Co. had begun the exclusive production of white granite and C. C. ware (*Crockery Journal*, March 13, 1875). Very likely it was at this time that production of brown canning jars ended, as none are known impressed “T., B. & Co.”). By 1875, Frederick Dallas likewise was manufacturing white granite ware and had most likely abandoned production of canning jars. With the death of George Scott in 1889, the firm became George Scott Sons and turned to the manufacture of white granite, decorated and printed table and toilet wares. Cincinnati directories list Samuel J. Scott, brother George E. Scott, and brother-in-law Joseph T. Waite from 1890 through 1900. Robert J. and Samuel J. Waite, the latter the foreman of the dipping room, also worked at the Scott pottery. There would be a receiver appointed in 1900 but by the following year

the pottery was owned by George Scott's daughter, Sarah A. Waite (Stout 1923: 82) and the name changed to Scott Pottery Co.



**George Scott's Sons' Ironstone Creamer**



Harry Molineux, an English immigrant who had worked in Missouri would spend most



### **Unrecorded Scott White Ware Mark**

of his life (before and after his relatively brief stint in Cincinnati) as a potter in Tiffin, Ohio, but was manager of the Scott Pottery Co., when it resumed operations in February 1902, after a long period of inactivity. Molineux disappears after 1902 and presumably returned to Tiffin. George Scott's son Samuel J. Scott (1847-1922), who had worked for the company

for many years, also left about this time, to work for the Zanesville Art Pottery, although his nephew, Samuel J. Waite, continued working there for a short while. By 1903 Scott had joined the Columbus Pottery Co. (*Glass*



**Samuel J. Scott (back) 1904**

*and Pottery World*, July, 1903). By the end of 1904, he was representing the Sharp Sand Brick Co., of Columbus (plant at Sugar Grove), as a charter member in the National Association of Manufacturers of Sand-Lime Products (*Clay Record*, December 30, 1904; *Brick*, January 1905: 34). Yet, by the end of August, 1905, he was suing the directors of the company to prevent them from selling and buying the plant (*Clay Record*, August 31, 1905). According to the 1906/07 Columbus city directory he was a “Promoter,” and the same source for 1908/09 listed him as “Broker.” By 1910 he was working for the Franklin Moving Sign Co. By 1920 he was retired and back in Cincinnati, living with his wife and widowed sister-in-law. Scott died at the Masonic home in Springfield, Ohio, January 30, 1922.

Samuel J. Scott's sister, Sarah A. Waite, had died ten years earlier, in 1912, her husband Joseph T. Waite in 1920. Her other brother, George E. Scott, is listed as a salesman in the 1902 Cincinnati directory and as a book keeper in 1903, but was no longer working for the Scott Pottery, which was last listed in the 1905 directory. The site of the pottery still yields modest amounts of waste material representing both Scott's yellow ware and Rockingham production and its later white ware.

### **Tempest & Co.**

Michael Tempest first appears in the 1855 Cincinnati directory as a partner in Brewer and Tempest's yellow and Rockingham ware pottery. His partner, Tunis Brewer (variously

listed as Jonas Brewer), was a prominent Cincinnati “mechanic” and one of the founders of the Ohio Mechanics’ Institute in 1829 (Greve 1904: 901) but spent most of his life in the carpentry trade. Brewer continued as a potter until 1859, two years after Tempest and his brother Nimrod formed their own firm, the Hamilton Road Pottery, in 1857. According to Stout (1923: 20), the Hamilton Road Pottery manufactured Rockingham and yellow ware and brown ware fruit jars. Lehner (1988:195) states that the Hamilton Road Pottery was owned by Michael and Nimrod Tempest from 1856 to 1865, but this is incorrect. Although Nimrod continued to work for his brother’s pottery, he does not appear to have been an owner after Frederick Dallas joined the company in 1860 or 1861.

No fruit jar examples attributable to either of the early firms are known and presumably their

wares were unmarked; however, brown or pumpkin-colored earthenware jars impressed



**Canner impressed “T & Co.”**





“T & Co.” are probably the most commonly seen Cincinnati canners and these can be rather narrowly dated, as Frederick Dallas purchased the company in 1865, when it became the Dallas Pottery. This provides a solid *terminus ante quem* date for the T & Co. canners. The form of Dallas canners identical to the most common T & Co. form supports this interpretation. Dallas’ entry into the firm, dated to 1860 or 1861, serves as an accurate *terminus post quem* date for Dallas canners. Creswick (1987: 207) seems to be the first person to attribute these jars to Tempest & Co.



## **Hawes' Ohio Business Directory for 1860-61**

In addition, there is an illustration of a slightly different canner style found in Hawe's 1860-61 business directory. The 14 lappet-shaped facets around the upper portion of the canner are distinctive, and it is believed that the large canner shown on the next page is an early Tempest & Co.'s "air tight fruit jar." A





**Canning Jar Attributed to Tempest & Co.**

conspicuous feature of this example is the bit of yellow clay accidentally mixed in the redware body. The same feature has also been noted on a marked T & Co. canner. The fact that it is unmarked suggests that this may be an early Tempest & Co. design. All known Tempest & Co. and Dallas canners have the lower half molded in a series of twelve flat, vertical panels, matched in the upper half by twelve slightly convex vertical panels. The large, unmarked example with lappet-like panels above has twelve and fourteen panels.

Assuming that Tempest & Co. or perhaps the earlier Hamilton Road pottery operated by the Tempest brothers produced yellow ware canners, a rare example (p. 35) with twelve-sided lower portion and almost unfaceted top portion might be attributed to them. It in any case is very likely an early Cincinnati product.

In 1865 Frederick Dallas bought out Michael Tempest's interest in Tempest & Co. and the firm became known as the Dallas



**Yellow Ware Canner Possibly Attributable  
to a Tempest Pottery**

Pottery (discussed in more detail below).  
The following year Michael Tempest opened

the Richmond Street Pottery as M. Tempest. Then, in 1867, together with Charles E. Brockmann and Jacob Feister [*sic*] (also Pfeister, or Pfeistman), Michael Tempest formed Tempest, Brockmann & Co. at the Richmond Street address, beginning the production of the first commercially viable whiteware in Ohio, which won the First Premium at the Cincinnati Industrial Exposition from 1870 to 1874 and at the Ohio State Fair of 1874 (*Crockery Journal*, February 6, 1875; Barber 1893:274-275). It is very probable that production of earthenware canners ended at this time.

William S. Sampson, Jr., son of a prominent Cincinnati queensware merchant, had joined the firm by 1870, and as Tempest, Brockmann & Co., this combination of British and German entrepreneurs became one of the largest pottery firms in Cincinnati in the second half of the nineteenth century, the number of employees reaching 80-100 in 1874, at a time when the business was described as being “a little

dull” (*Crockery Journal* December 26, 1874). Although nothing (including the correct form of his name) is known of Jacob Feister/Pfeister/Pfeistman, he was still in the firm as late as 1875.

The careers of the Tempest brothers are worth following, for they both continued working as potters, although not always together and apparently with different degrees of success. In 1870 Nimrod was a journeyman potter and foreman at the Tempest & Co. works. He appears to have been employed by his more successful elder brother for many years. As late as 1880 Nimrod was still a potter, 50 years old, predeceased by his wife, Rosa, and living with his daughter Barbara in the home of his brother in-law, Patrick Stapleton, a teamster. Similarly, David and Watson Tempest, believed to be another brother and a nephew of Michael Tempest, arrived from England in 1866 and were working for the Tempest, Brockmann & Co. from at least 1867 to 1870. David early quit

the trade to become a rag picker and was still plying that occupation in 1880; Watson, by that time, was living across the Ohio River in Covington and working for the George Scott Pottery on Front Street in Cincinnati. He was still doing so in 1890.

Michael Tempest died in 1886 and his wife Nancy in 1893, but not before a certain family unpleasantness occurred. Husband and wife are both interred in Spring Grove Cemetery, along with son James and daughter Sarah. The unpleasantness, relevant here because of information it provides about Michael and Nancy Tempest, was an attempt on the part of their daughters to have Nancy declared an “imbecile,” in the legal parlance of the day. The case was settled in Nancy’s favor by the Hamilton County Probate Court in 1889 (Goebel 1890: 200-210). According to testimony, the Tempests had arrived in the United States some forty years earlier [i. e., ca. 1849] “without means.” Michael established

a little business manufacturing earthen ware, greatly assisted by his wife. As the business increased and became very profitable, he was thereby enabled to accumulate property. Mrs. Tempest was described as, in her early days, “possessing great physical endurance, of robust constitution, of positive character, attentive and economical in the management of her household.” Saving money from her household allowance, she purchased stock in natural gas, street railroads, and the Little Miami Railroad. Unhappy with their father’s will, which they felt unfairly favored their brother James, sisters Hannah [Donaldson] and Mary Jane [Stanley] were made even more unhappy by their mother’s plans for her wealth and tried to have her declared incompetent. Like her deceased husband, Nancy declared that she had confidence in her daughters but not in their husbands and therefore placed the daughters’ share of her legacy in trust with her son James. The sisters’ petition was denied, and Nancy would live another four years.

At the time of his death in the spring or summer of 1886, Michael Tempest was president of Tempest, Brockmann, & Sampson Pottery, the successor to Tempest, Brockmann, & Co., and manufacturers of C.C., White Granite, and Decorated Ware. Son James E. Tempest was assistant manager, while nephew Watson as well as brother Nimrod also still appear to have been employed by the establishment. Michael had made his son James executor and left him his share of the pottery on the condition that James pay \$8000 to the estate. There is no mention of Watson or Nimrod (Hamilton Co. Probate Court, Will Book v. 42, p. 285-287).

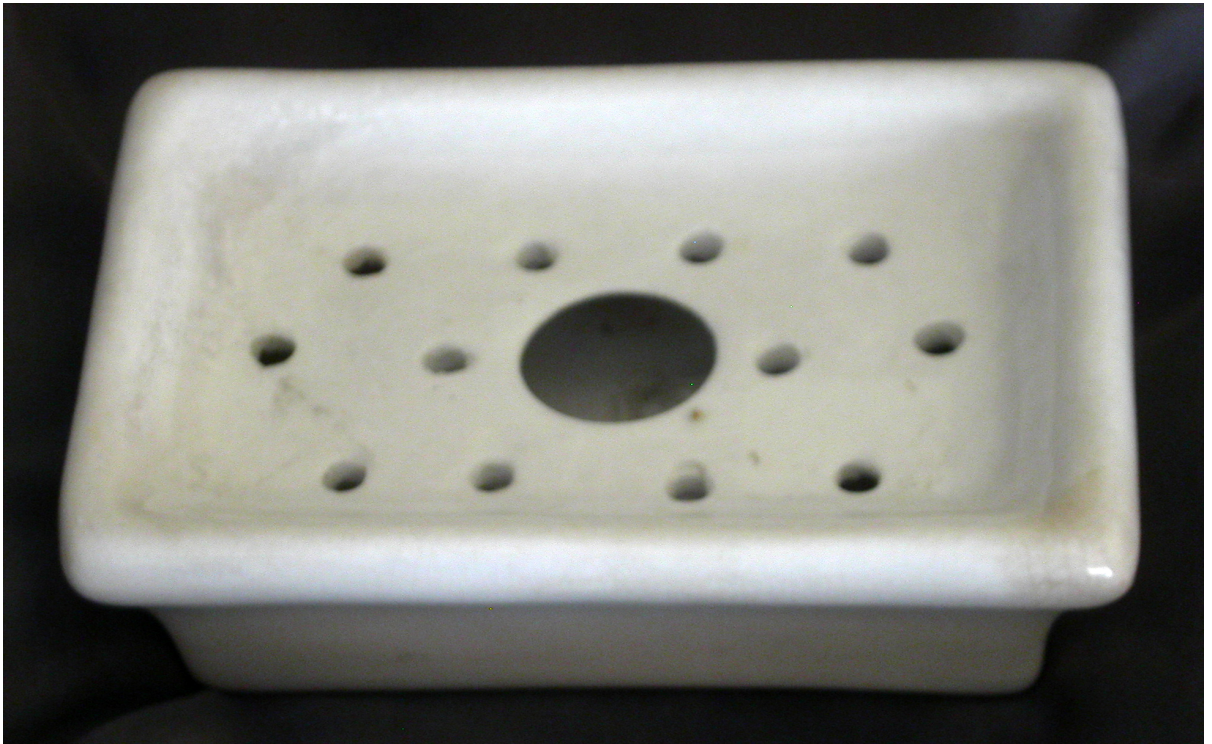
In 1888, Tempest, Brockmann, & Sampson became the Brockmann Pottery, manufacturers of White Granite, C. C. and Decorated Ware, with C. F. Brockmann as secretary. It seems doubtful that any of the Tempests were still connected with the pottery by this time. C. E. Brockmann, however, remained head of C. E.





### **Unrecorded T. B. & Co. Backstamp**

Brockmann, Importer of and Dealer in China, Glass and Queensware, Toys and Fancy Goods. Presumably the Brockmann store served as the chief outlet for the Brockmann Pottery's ware at this time. The Brockmann Pottery was last known to be operating in 1913 (Longdon: 138).



## **T. B. & Co. Ironstone Soapdish**

### **Frederick Dallas**

Frederick Dallas, executor of William Bromley's will in 1867, first appears in the 1850-51 Cincinnati directory, listed as a book keeper boarding at the Madison Hotel. He had emigrated from Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1849. After a decade of keeping books, he

became a partner with Michael and Nimrod Tempest in their Hamilton Road Pottery and in 1866 the establishment became the Dallas Pottery. For the most part, the canners impressed DALLAS” are indistinguishable from those marked “T & Co.,” with the exception of one form characterized by having the upper panels separated by wide grooves that do not quite extend to the top edge of the canner. This form may be later than the more typical shape but there is no concrete evidence for such a surmise.



**Impressed Dallas Mark**





**Dallas Canner**



### **Rare Dallas Canner with Capacity Mark**

Although Dallas claimed to be “the first party in Cincinnati to manufacture a kiln of white granite and C. C. Ware (*Crockery Journal*, February 27, 1875), the first definite evidence of this is an advertisement in the 1869 Williams directory listing him as a manufacturer of White Granite and C. C. ware, also Yellow and Rockingham (the latter suggesting the continued manufacture of fruit jars until at least that year). As noted above (p. 36), however, the honor of producing the first commercial whiteware in the Ohio Valley is

generally given to Tempest, Brockmann & Co., who referred their pottery as the “Pioneer White Ware Works.”

By 1875 Dallas was no longer producing Rockingham and yellow ware, only white granite, C. C. ware, and Parian marble ware, employing 100 hands with a capacity of \$100,000 per annum (*Crockery Journal* 1(4): 8 and 1(6): 6 February 1875). In its later years the pottery produced some artware and was home to the Cincinnati Pottery Club, but this would end with Frederick Dallas's death in June, 1881, and his widow continued the pottery for only a short time. Plans to incorporate it and erect a new pottery fell through, and its closing was announced in 1882 (Evans 1987: 78-79). The Dallas Pottery Co. is last listed in the 1883-1884 Cincinnati city directory. Anne Dallas, the widow of Frederick, died in 1888, and husband and wife are both buried in Spring Grove Cemetery.





**A Variant Dallas Canner Shape**





**Dallas Parian Pitcher Dated 1881**



**Dallas Art Pottery Vase Dated 1881**





**Dallas Art Pottery Mark "Dallas 1881"**



**Dallas Jasperware Soapdish 1881**

## Some of the Competition

Conservative estimates indicate that the production of yellow ware and brown ware canners in Cincinnati spanned not much more than the decade 1860-1870, possibly to 1875. These rough dates are subject to revision if and when additional documentation is found, but U. S. Patent Office records suggest that they may be fairly accurate.

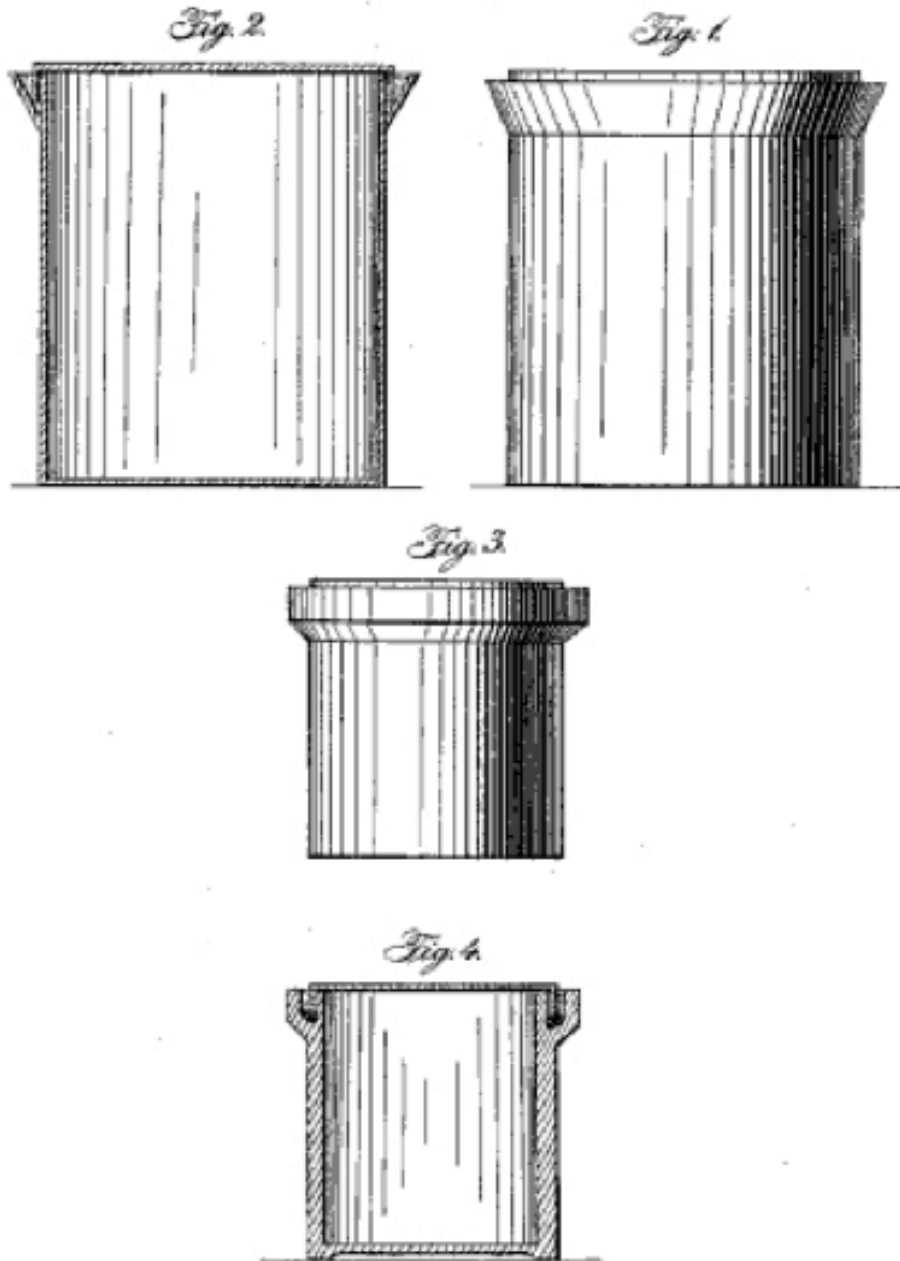
As early as 1855 (Patent 12,153) Robert Arthur patented a self sealing fruit can distinguished by the presence of a groove around the interior of the rim allowing the firm setting of a lid into an adhesive placed in the groove. Although his patent did not indicate the composition of such fruit jars, early advertisements (*New York Times*, October 4, 1855) specify “Arthur’s Patent Self-Sealing Cans and Glass Jars.” A puff piece in *The Lady’s Home Magazine of Literature, Art, and Fashion* (January, 1857: 91) reveals that they

were made of glass, white queensware, and fire- and acid-proof cane-colored stoneware. (In the interest of full disclosure, it should be noted that Arthur's *Lady's Home Magazine* was published by popular temperance crusader (author of *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room and What I Saw There*) and fiction writer T. S. Arthur, who was a member of the Philadelphia firm of Arthur, Burnham & Gilroy, the company that manufactured the Arthur fruit jar. This firm closed in 1861 (Gilroy 1909: 27), which would have eliminated competition with the Cincinnati fruit can manufacturers who were more-or-less copying Arthur's invention. Manufacturers of stoneware canning jars followed suit and were especially prolific in the Muskingum and Perry Co. region of east-central Ohio (See "Putnam Currency," p. 83). It is also possible that the technique had been in use by earthenware and stoneware canner manufacturers for an indeterminate period of time prior to Arthur's patent, very likely dating back to the period of Spratt's 1854 patent.

R. ARTHUR.  
Fruit Can.

No. 12,153.

Patented Jan. 2, 1855.



**Arthur's Grooved Lid Fruit Jar Patent**

Experimentation and inventions to improve the canner did not end with Robert Arthur nor with the rapid introduction of the glass canner. For example, Baltimore pottery Edwin Bennett, in 1869 was experimenting with a screw cap and packing ring for a “vitreous or earthen jar” (Pat. 96,869) while in the following year, William Galloway of Philadelphia (Pat. 99,662), commenting upon the irregularity in ceramic jar rims and mouths sometimes requiring grinding, developed an external packing that would extend above the edge of the jar mouth. Despite their comparative fragility, glass canning jars had the decided advantage of providing visibility of the jar contents, so that even as early as 1857 Bennett (Pat. 18,078) advised “the use entirely (if convenient) of glass vessels, for thereby, should there be by any accident must or mildew with the vessel, it may be then readily discovered through the glass.” He also believed that glass vessels could be produced



more cheaply. Nonetheless, Bennett continued to manufacture earthenware canners, probably until 1869, when the firm turned to white ware, and the pottery continued operations until 1936, well after Bennett's death in 1881.

Seemingly at one time or another virtually every earthenware and stoneware pottery in the Midwest manufactured canning jars. Only a few that can be identified to manufacturer or seem related to the Cincinnati canner industry are noted here. The most intriguing are yellow ware or brown ware examples that almost beg to be attributed to Cincinnati makers and very likely to one of the Tempest potteries (e.g., p. 35). Much more enigmatic are relatively fancy stoneware canners-- often coated with brown Albany slip-- such as the rare example with embossed leaf or fern decoration (p. 74) or, for that matter, a variety of barrel-shaped yellow ware canners (p. 70). Some of these surely represent the East Liverpool industry, but concrete evidence is lacking. McAllister and

Michel (1993:79-81) and McAllister (1997) illustrate a wide variety of unmarked yellow ware canner forms.

Production of canning jars in the central Ohio region of the Muskingum Valley and northeastern Ohio (Akron area) seems dominated by salt-glazed, Albany slip, and Bristol glazed stoneware, and such canners tend to be considerably later than the Cincinnati industry. One notable exception are small canning jars made by Adams, Allison, and Co. of Akron and known to date to ca. 1870. In that year (U. S. Manufacturers' Schedule) Adams & Allison were producing 700, 000 fruit jars per year, valued at \$24,000, as well as \$10,000 worth of "stone bottles." Both jars and canners are neatly impressed "Adams, Allison, & Co., Middlebury, Ohio." (Middlebury was incorporated into Akron in 1872.) Blair (1965: 26, 38) gives impossibly early dates of 1855 and 1860 for this company, for while Frank Adams was producing sewer tile as early as 1860, Bryon Allison was only

15 years old. In fact the company does not seem to date much before or after 1870, perhaps indicating a waning demand for these



**Adams, Allison & Co. Canner ca. 1870**

small earthenware and stoneware canners. While the Adams and Allison fruit jars vary considerably in color, most are a dark tan somewhat resembling the pumpkin-colored Cincinnati glaze; the gray body is quite different, however, derived from lower Pennsylvanian fire clays of the Akron area.

More closely resembling the Cincinnati canners in form was a rather squat, twelve-sided Albany slip covered stoneware jar produced by the Weeks Brothers of Akron. These are seldom marked but rarely the base is embossed with the name of the company and "Akron, O." Brothers Frederick H. and Arthur J. Weeks operated the Akron Pottery Works together for only a few short years, 1888-1891, before going their separate ways. The embossed mark leaves little doubt as to the function of these fruit jars, although there must remain some question about the particular fruit depicted.



**Weeks Brothers Canner 1888-1891**





### **Weeks Bros. Canner Base**

Also at Akron, brothers E. H. and C. J. Merrill and later E. H. and son H. E. Merrill, manufactured twelve-sided stoneware bottles and canning jars, using patented machines (Pat. 5,206 and 78,676) of their own devising. These bottles and jars are quite dis-



tinctive by virtue of their swirled base, and the design does not incorporate the grooved rim characteristic of Cincinnati and so many other fruit jars of the period.

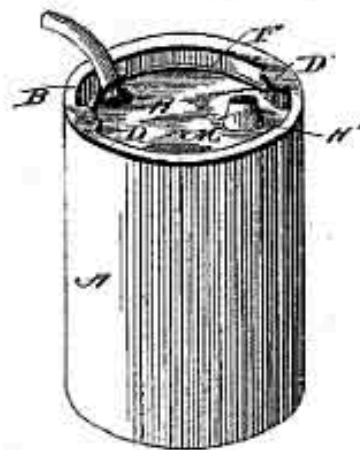
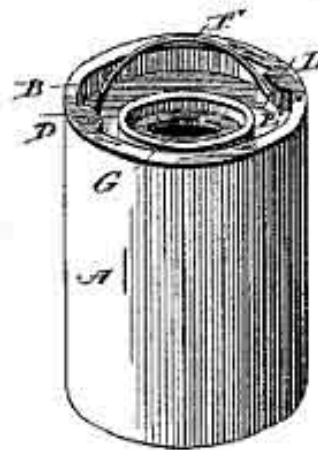
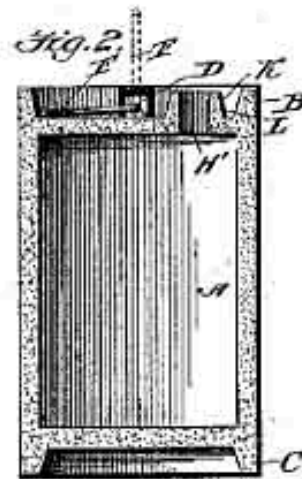
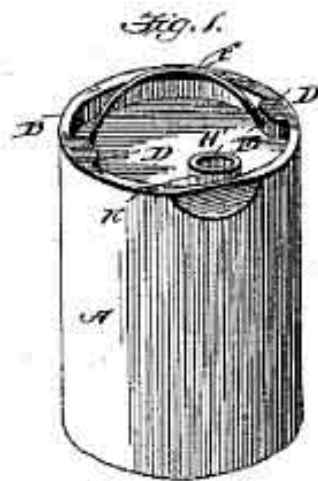
In both the Akron and Zanesville regions the situation is blurred somewhat by the development of a variety of flat-topped jugs that were designed for ease in stacking. Often handleless and with attachments for bales, these jugs clearly were not used for canning purposes and will not be considered in detail herein, but it is worth noting that at Zanesville the Clark Brothers developed and patented a straight-sided container of several sizes and forms, including a canner, with both salt-glazed and Albany slip exterior, indicating that there was still a market for sturdy stoneware canners through the 1890s and the turn of the century.

(No Model.)

W. E. & C. W. CLARK.  
JAR, JUG, OR CAN.

No. 475,078.

Patented May 17, 1892.



*Fig. 3.*

*Fig. 4.*

**Clark Brothers Patent Jar, Jug, or Can**  
**Note bale handle in Fig. 3**



As noted, while both the Akron and Zanesville regions witnessed some early yellow ware manufacturing, the earthenware wax sealer canning jar does not seem to have

continued as an important element of the Akron area industry, even though the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century did see significant production of more sophisticated stoneware canner styles. The Zanesville area, on the other hand, witnessed an industry characterized by large stoneware canners (often with a strap handle) quite unlike the smaller Cincinnati yellow and brown ware products. These were so prolific as to be dubbed “Putnam Currency,” were often labeled with cobalt stencil or the impressed name of the manufacturer, and were shipped down the Muskingum and Ohio Rivers in large amounts (Murphy 2010). Unfortunately, with rare exceptions, these are so indistinguishable in form as to be unidentifiable to manufacturer unless they are marked. For this reason they are not considered in detail in this publication. Continuing well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there

were numerous experiments with flat top jugs but little attempt to improve the stoneware canner.

## **Rockingham Canners**

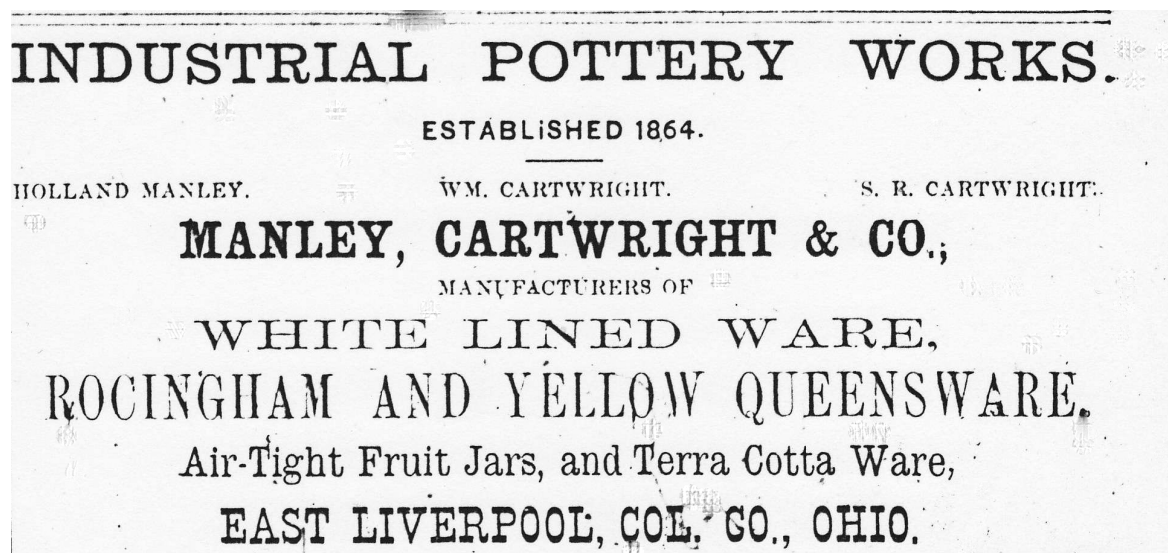
In contrast to Akron and Zanesville, yellow ware and especially Rockingham canner production was an important aspect of the East Liverpool industry. Although only Manley and Cartwright's Rockingham glaze canners have been identified thus far, the production of Rockingham canners in the East Liverpool area is also a striking contrast with the Cincinnati region, where Rockingham glaze was almost never used on canners. In 1866, Morley Godwin & Flentke advertised six different sizes of yellow ware "jelly jars made by their Salamander Pottery (1866 price list, author's collection); production may have continued as late as 1874 when the company switched to ironstone (Gates and Ormerod 46). In that year (Lake 1874: 59) Rockingham and Yellow Ware Air-tight Fruit Jar manufacture

was advertised by no fewer than eight East Liverpool potteries (West, Hardwick & Co.; Isaac W. Knowles; T. Rigby & Co.; Agner, Foutts & Co.; S. & W. Baggott, Manley, Cartwright & Co.; George S. Harker & Co., McDevitt, Cochran, & Co.). Another East Liverpool pottery, Thompson and Herbert (1868-1870) also made “air-tight fruit jars” as very likely did their successor, C. C. Thompson, for an indeterminate period. In addition the short-lived N. M. Simms & Co. stoneware pottery advertised air-tight fruit jars. By 1875 Rigby and Isaac Knowles were out of business and only four of the remaining eight firms (Agner, Foutts & Co., S. & W. Baggott, Manly & Cartwright, and C. C. Thompson) were still advertising air-tight fruit jars.

In 1866, G. N. Abbey & Co. of Cleveland was advertising as wholesale dealers in Ohio stone ware and “all kinds of Fruit Jars, viz: Stoneware Jars, Brown and Yellow Jars, and



Glass Jars for Sealing and Self-sealing” (Abbey price list, Author’s Collection). Grove N. Abbey had begun his career in Akron and there were strong ties with the Akron stoneware industry. It was said in fact that the needs of Abbey & Co. customers actually regulated the amount of stoneware produced in Summit Co. Abbey obtained his stoneware from Akron, but his Rockingham and yellow ware came from East Liverpool potteries, and his glassware from Pittsburgh and New York (Joblin 1869: 132).



## 1875 Crockery Journal Advertisement



**Manley & Cartwright Canner**



Several distinctive Rockingham glazed canners are known but cannot definitely be attributed to East Liverpool. One unique example with an impressed star design clearly



**Unidentified “Barrel-Shaped” Canner**





### **Unidentified Barrel-shaped Canner**

intended as an identifying mark lacks the distinctive Spratt/Arthur groove. Unfortunately for purposes of identification, there were many

Star potteries and the only one in East Liverpool was Laughlin and Simms, later N. M. Simms & Co., a short-lived affair that made only stoneware.



**“Star” Rockingham Canner**



By 1870, although clearly there was still a market for the earthenware fruit jar, it was receiving increased competition from the sturdier stoneware canner. The comparatively sudden development of whiteware production at about this time was a further blow to the Rockingham and yellow ware industry, as was of course development of the glass jar and bottle. (John L. Mason's first patents for making glass jars and bottles dates to 1858, while Hemingray and others were active by the early 1860s.)

## **Stoneware Canners**

The profusion of stoneware potteries manufacturing grooved lid fruit cans is so great both during and after the Civil War and continuing through the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> C. that for the most part these generic products can rarely be identified to manufacturer. As noted above, this was largely true of the Rockingham and yellow ware canners. These products

were so utilitarian and “common” that it was not worth the effort to mark them with the manufacturer’s identity. There are exceptions, particularly as the use of cobalt stenciling became common and especially in the Muskingum Valley region, where impressed makers’ marks remained a strong tradition. A few exhibited some artistic pretensions, such as the Albany slip canner with molded fern leaves shown on p. 74. And, deliberately or not, some Albany slip canners seem to mimic earlier Cincinnati forms, though they lack the reddish or brown body. Several exceptional Midwestern stoneware examples are described from plants at Peoria, Illinois, and Bonaparte Iowa. Redwing, Minnesota, produce similar marked canners. This tradition continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> C., despite competition from glass canners and packaging, and at least one company (U. S. Stoneware, Akron, Ohio) was producing white Bristol-glazed stoneware canners as late as the 1950s.



**Unidentified Albany Slip Stoneware Canner**

## Peoria Pottery

The Peoria Pottery Co. is believed to have begun in 1863 by John Bryner, who was born in Pennsylvania but by 1850 had moved to Peoria, where he was constable and by 1860 had become sheriff. In May, 1863, Bryner bought an interest in the American Pottery Co., a manufacturer of yellow ware and “refined tablewares” that apparently was destroyed by fire at about that time. According to Mansburger and Mounce (1990: 5), “It is generally assumed that the American Pottery Company closed its doors in 1863.” They, however, appear to have overlooked Bailey’s 1864-65 *Illinois State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (1864: 504, 508, 509, 511), which lists both the American Pottery, Amos M. Johnson, proprietor, and Peoria Stone Ware, William W. Travis and John B. Bryner, proprietors, suggesting that they remained separate entities. Nothing more is known of William Travis, and neither he nor Bryner

seems to have been associated with any of the earlier attempts at pottery production in Peoria (Mansberger and Mounce 1990: 5-6) During the Civil War the firm operated as Travis and Bryner (U.S. IRS Tax Assessment, 1864), but Bryner had enlisted as colonel in the Illinois infantry in 1861 and was mustered out March 17, 1865, two days before his death at Springfield, Illinois. Administration papers filed by his widow indicate a total estate value of only \$500 and there is no mention of the pottery. (Peoria County Clerk of Courts, Case File 1257).

Mansberger and Mounce (1990) provide details of the later history of the Peoria Pottery Co. and illustrate examples of its ware, including a dodecahedral canner that closely matches the shape of those produced at the Bonaparte, Iowa, pottery. The Peoria examples often boast a distinctive “Peoria Glaze” and are slightly larger. Both have the distinctive rounded upper edge to the lower set of panels and of course both are made of stone-



ware, not the yellow ware or brown earthenware from which the Cincinnati canners are made. Mansberger and Mounce document that the “Peoria Glaze” canners were being manufactured as early as 1871 and that in 1875 the firm was producing 36,000 fruit jars per year (*Ibid.* 1990: 7, 14). These authors surmise that production could have continued throughout the 1890s although they also cite evidence that this product may have been abandoned in 1888 when the company began production of “table and Toilet ware.” White ware production continued until 1902, when the pottery was acquired by the Crown Pottery of Evansville, Indiana, and ended in 1902.



**Peoria Pottery Mark**



**A Peoria Canner**

## Bonaparte Pottery



Canners made at the pottery in Bonaparte, Iowa are of heavy stoneware with a bright Albany slip glaze. In shape they closely resemble Cincinnati forms with dodecahedral facets both above and below the mid-section join line. The tops of the lower set of panels, however are distinctively curved, unlike most Cincinnati examples.





**Bonaparte Canner**

The Bonaparte Pottery was reportedly started in 1866 by Sydney Parker and Thomas Hanback, and that firm conducted the business for several years before Robert Wilson succeeded Mr. Parker (Thomas n.d.). Sydney or Sidney Parker is first found in the 1850 census in Vernon, Van Buren Co., Iowa, 15 years old, living in the household of James Johnston, an older potter also born in England. In 1860, Parker is listed as a 23 year old potter still living in Vernon, Iowa, adjacent to Thomas A. Hanbeck, a 22 year old potter [the Bonaparte Pottery website incorrectly states that Hanbeck came to Vernon in 1867, then, both inconsistently and incorrectly, that he moved to Bonaparte in 1866], and John C. Grimsley a 26 year old, Ohio-born potter who in 1850 was living in the household of Edward Sniff, a Newton Township, Muskingum County, Ohio, potter. Grimsley stayed in Vernon, where he was still potting in 1885 (Iowa State Census). The data conform with



the statement that Parker and Hanback started the Bonaparte Pottery together. Robert Wilson was an Englishman, as was Parker, but little else is known about him, including precisely when he potted in Bonaparte, although he is listed as a “potteryman” there in both the 1870 and 1880 census enumerations. All three—Wilson, Parker, and Hanback are listed in the 1880 census. Hanback and Wilson are said to have employed from six to ten hands and two teams, so very likely Wilson continued to work as one of their hands. These works generally turned out about 125,000 gallons of pottery per year. They also made flower pots, drain pipe and fire proof bricks. The pottery closed in 1895, at which time Sydney Parker, curiously, was listed as the only potter in Bonaparte, Hanback being enumerated as a farmer and there being no trace of Wilson.

Production of the Bonaparte canners clearly fell after the peak period of production in Cincinnati and date no earlier than 1866. Canner production may have continued until

the demise of the pottery in 1895. Although very similar in form, the considerable difference in the stoneware body is sufficient to distinguish the Bonaparte canners from Cincinnati products.

### **“Putnam Currency”**

The production of stoneware in the Muskingum and Perry Co. region during the period of the Civil War and for several decades afterwards was so prolific that as these crocks and jugs and canning jars were shipped down the Muskingum and Ohio River to Cincinnati and points beyond they were often referred to collectively as “Putnam Currency” for half a century (Schneider 1951: 88, 119, 259). While Schneider noted that this Putnam Currency made its way all the way down the Mississippi to New Orleans, the significance of the Cincinnati-Zanesville connection was probably first outlined by Murphy (1993), with

more detail being added recently (Murphy 2010 ). Suffice it here to point out that as early as 1850 James Seamans and Hartzel Hainer were advertising their Wholesale Stoneware Depot, succeeded by 1856 by Seamans, Hainer & McKnight, both Seamans and William McKnight living in Putnam. For a few years the company was McCoy, Benjamin & Co., including William N. McCoy, of Putnam. When McCoy dropped out around 1861, the firm became McDonald and Benjamin, and theirs are the first known marked pieces. Benjamin became the sole proprietor in 1867 or 1868 (and moved from Putnam to Covington, where his former partner, Cincinnati whiskey merchant Hugh McDonald, also lived). While James Benjamin operated his own pottery in Putnam, it appears that some of the wares sold in Benjamin's Stoneware Depot were actually made at the local country "blue bird" potteries in Muskingum Co., as sherds with Benjamin's stenciled fragments have been reported from



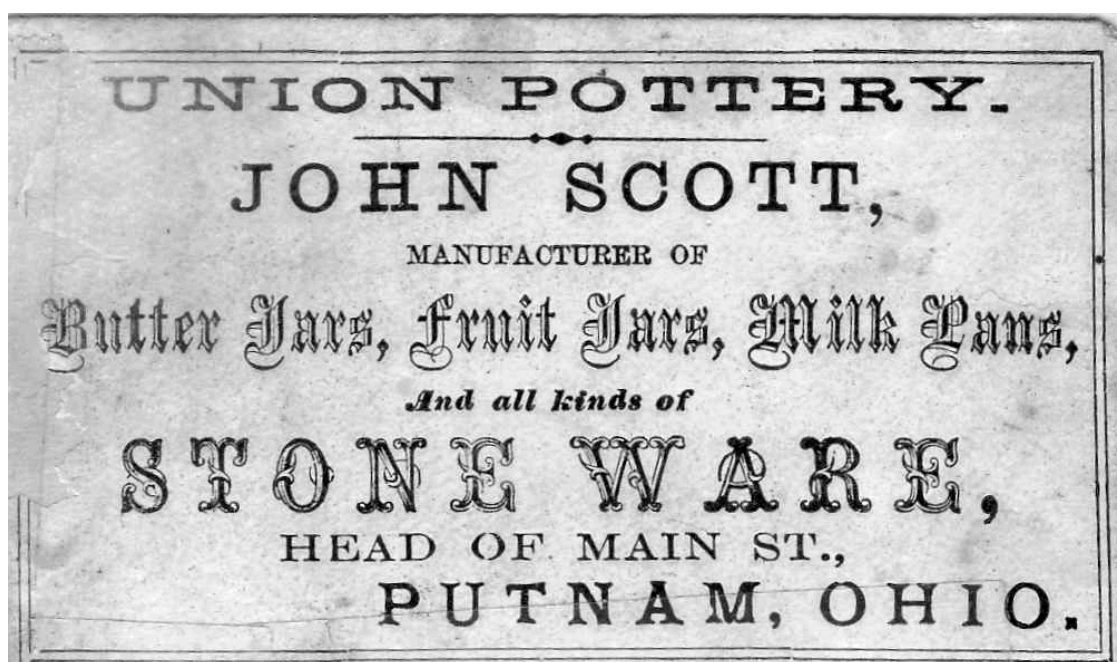
**“From McDonald and Benjamin, Cin., O.”**

some of these (James Morton, pers. comm.). Benjamin's Cincinnati Stoneware Depot lasted as late as 1895, when C. W. Weaver was manager. It was later operated as C. W. Weaver's Stoneware Depot and later as John Weaver's Stoneware Depot.

There is one other connection between Zanesville/Putnam and the Cincinnati canner industry. A large, rather remarkably crude, salt-glazed stoneware canner with *eleven* panels appears to be an attempt at copying the popular Cincinnati forms. No more than three examples of this canner have been seen in thirty years of collecting Ohio stoneware and these have all been found in the central Ohio area. A fluke discovery of a fragment of one of these canners, found in disturbed ground at the southeast end of the Sixth Street Bridge connecting Zanesville and Putnam strongly suggests that these were the product of a pottery that once existed here. Unfortunately, we can not be certain which pottery produced these. In 1860, it was the site of John Scott's



Union Pottery. In 1866, as indicated by the county atlas, it was the site of J. B. Williams' pottery, which may mean that John Scott was deceased by this time or had left the area. To complicate matters, there are several known pieces of stoneware impressed with "J. Scott and Williams." The unusual inclusion of Scott's first name initial is doubtless to distinguish him from his younger brother Samuel Scott, another Putnam potter of the period. Their father, David Scott, was a saddle and harness maker from Pennsylvania. John was established as a potter as early as 1860 but apparently died young. Samuel, five years younger, was a journeyman potter in 1870, still living with his parents. The only known piece attributable to Samuel Scott is a good-sized crock (whereabouts currently unknown) crudely marked in cobalt script: Sam Scott for Harrison and Protection, obviously dating to the presidential campaign of 1888. As for the Williams in "J. Scott and Williams," this was



### Undated John Scott Business Card

no doubt John B. Williams; but biographical information on him is almost as scanty as that on John Scott. Census records indicate he was born in either (!) Virginia or Vermont, but none actually list him as a potter. The 1880 census, for example, lists him as a farmer living on Moxahala Avenue. In 1850 he was a stone mason; in 1860, a constable; and in 1870, a livery stable keeper.



**Unmarked Canner Attributed to Putnam, Ohio**

## Conclusions

Not surprisingly, we are left with a number of perplexing questions. Was George Scott's 1860 invention the impetus for the development of the Cincinnati earthenware canning industry? In the absence of documented production prior to this date, it would seem very probable, though credit needs to be given to Spratt and Arthur regardless of whether they actually invented the grooved rim closure or simply were the first to go to the trouble of patenting it. What peculiarities of raw material or production methods were responsible for the development of the "pumpkin-colored" or "brown" canner? (It seems likely that the clay source was lower Pennsylvanian fireclays from the Ironton-Ashland area rather than local Ordovician or glacio-fluviatile clays., but this needs clarification.) Why did the much heavier (albeit larger and sturdier) stoneware canners

shipped downriver from the Muskingum Valley region continue in use after the demise of the Cincinnati earthenware canner? Were they cheaper or simply more functional? Or were they used for a somewhat different function?

Advances in closure design involving metal clamps and rubber rings seem to have prolonged the life of the stoneware canner well into the 1920s, as did the adoption of white Bristol glaze in the 1880s but most of these innovations could not be applied to more fragile earthenware canners. On the other hand, this disadvantage was probably of less significance than the novelty of being able to see the contents of an even more fragile glass container, as well as by developments in the mechanized manufacture of glass containers.

Archaeologically, further study of the Cincinnati canner industry may provide additional refinements in dating these artifacts,



as in some cases even unmarked sherds may be attributable to a specific manufacturer and may be datable to a relatively short time span, unlike most of the rather generic stoneware canners. Of particular interest will be the gradual delineation of the geographic occurrence of Cincinnati canners. If George Scott was shipping his pottery “everywhere throughout the West and South, including Illinois, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and the territories,” traces of this distinctive utilitarian ware should be showing up in archaeological excavations. Perhaps they have already.

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